



City of Madison News Release

For Immediate Release:

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Informational Website Link:

www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/water/wells.cfm, www.publichealthmdc.com/beaches/

Flood Waters and Runoff Create Health Challenges

Possible Chemical and Bacterial Contamination Requires Attention

Recent heavy rains have created flood conditions throughout Dane County. Although the immediate concern is the dangers created by flooded roadways and heavy runoff, flood conditions can also lead to a number of health risks.

Heavy rains on farmlands create storm water runoff that may contain manure, fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides that enter streams, lakes and other surface waters. The contaminants in flood water can lead to high bacteria counts, elevated agricultural chemical and nutrient levels that can promote the growth of blue-green algae, all of which can result in beach closures and increased risks of waterborne illness in both humans and animals.

This contaminated runoff can also pollute drinking water in private wells if the wellhead has been submerged for any length of time. Testing of well water after such an event is strongly recommended. The laboratory at Public Health-Madison and Dane County (PHMDC) and the State Lab of Hygiene are both certified to test drinking water. For information on water testing call PHMDC at (608) 266-4821 or check our website at www.publichealthmdc.com/environmental/water/wells.cfm.

Flooded basements are an ideal environment for mold and bacteria. A basement that stays wet for more than two days creates a perfect setting for the growth of mold. This can pose a serious risk to your family's health. For information on how to clean up mold or prevent its growth, PHMDC has an informative brochure available at www.publichealthmdc.com/documents/MasterMold.pdf. If you have more questions about mold, call PHMDC at (608) 266-4821.

Heavy rains invariably leave standing water, which promotes the breeding of mosquitoes. Beyond being a nuisance, some varieties of mosquitoes carry West Nile Virus. If going outside in the early morning and early evening hours, please make sure to use repellent that contains 6 - 30% DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 to reduce the risk of mosquito bites to exposed areas.

PHMDC carries out regular water testing on area beaches throughout the swimming season. The department also has professional staff performing year-round testing other surface waters in the area that may have been contaminated. For updated reports on the water conditions of area beaches and to see which are affected by blue-green algae, please go to www.publichealthmdc.com/beaches/.

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NEWS RELEASE

Public Health - Madison & Dane County

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